

Troopers Offer Tips to Protect Yourself and Your Property



Dover – Being in the midst of the holiday shopping season, with the weather turning colder and the hours of daylight decreased, the Delaware State Police have seen an increase in the number of thefts from vehicles, not only in parking lots, but at residences as well. Another crime trend also on the rise during the holiday season is the theft of delivered packages from residences.

In order to help you protect yourself and your property we would like to offer the following crime prevention tips.

Protect Yourself

- Keep your head up and scan your surroundings. Make eye contact with people so they are aware that *you* see them. This sends a message that you know they are there, and that you can also identify them if necessary.
- Walk confidently. Project an assertive, confident image.
- Avoid listening to music through earphones when out on the street. It prevents you from paying full attention, and distracts you from what and who is around you.
- If you are being followed, or you see a person or group

that makes you feel uncomfortable, give yourself permission to act; cross the street, walk in another direction, go in to a business, or ask other people walking if you may walk a short distance with them.

- If someone demands your property and displays or implies in any way that they have a weapon, don't resist. Your physical property isn't worth getting injured or killed over.

Secure Your Vehicle

- Do not leave valuables in your car. That sounds like common sense, but drivers/passengers do leave items of value in plain view every day. If you leave valuable items visible in your car, your car is automatically a target.
- If you must leave valuable items in your car while out and about, place items out of sight before reaching your destination or move them inconspicuously.
- Once home, unload your valuables immediately. Do not store valuables in your car any longer than necessary, and certainly never overnight.
- Try to park in busy, well-lighted areas, or in your garage (if you have one).
- Raise your windows and lock ALL of your vehicle's doors even if you plan to be gone for only a brief time. Every week, items are stolen from unlocked vehicles where the owner expected to be away for "just a second."
- Set any alarm or anti-theft device. If you have one, use it! Many people believe that car alarms no longer make a difference, but they can be an effective deterrent to vehicle break-ins
- Don't think your dark tinted windows will hide your valuables. Thieves often use flashlights to see through tint, and after-market tint is handy to keep all the broken glass in one "sheet" when they break out your window.

Deter Package Theft

Package thefts often increase between the months of October and January. Some package thieves follow delivery trucks and then take the packages after the delivery is made. Others are crimes of opportunity, when thieves see packages in plain view of the street. Here are a few measures you can take to decrease your chances of being a target:

- Track your shipment online.
- Choose a shipping option that requires you to sign for delivery.
- Arrange to ship the package to another location for someone else to receive. This can be a friend, relative, trusted neighborhood or landlord/apartment leasing office. Many local 'mailbox' businesses may agree to accept shipment of your item for a small fee.
- Ask the delivery service to hold the package for customer pick-up at their facility.
- A more expensive option is to buy a locking bin. This should be bolted down so the bin cannot be removed. You can then give the key code to the delivery company.

Regardless of the situation, circumstance or location, if you observe any type of suspicious activity make sure to report it.

"TRUST YOUR GUT"

"SEE SOMETHING SAY SOMETHING"

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Released: 121517 1245

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